

IN THE CLAIMS

1 – 20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) A tissue retention system comprising:

a suture anchor comprising:

an elongated body having an exterior sidewall, a proximal end and an opposing distal end displaced from the proximal end along a longitudinal axis, wherein a first suture port and a separate second suture port extend through at least a portion of the body and the first suture port is independently fully encircled and uninterrupted by a first interior surface along a portion of its length and the second suture port is independently fully encircled and uninterrupted by a second interior surface along a portion of its length ~~each port is independently fully encircled by an interior surface along at least a portion of its length;~~
a channel near the proximal end of the elongated body, wherein the channel is formed within the exterior sidewall of the elongated body; and

a helical thread wound about and outwardly projecting from the elongated body;

wherein at least a first portion of the first suture port extends substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis;

wherein the first suture port is spaced apart from the longitudinal axis so as to not intersect the longitudinal axis;

wherein the elongated body is formed as a single, unitary piece.

22. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 21, wherein the first suture port extends distally of a proximal end of the helical thread.

23. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 22, wherein the first suture port intersects the helical thread.

24. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 21, wherein at least a second portion of the first suture port extends nonparallel to the longitudinal axis.

25. (Previously Amended) The tissue retention system of claim 21, wherein the first and second suture ports are symmetrically arranged about the longitudinal axis.
26. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 21, wherein a bore extends fully through the body along the longitudinal axis, wherein the first suture port is positioned such that the first suture port is not in communication with the bore.
27. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 21, further comprising at least one suture positionable through at least the first suture port.
28. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 21, further comprising a tool configured to interface with the suture anchor to facilitate driving the suture anchor into bone.
29. (Currently Amended) A tissue retention system comprising:
a suture anchor comprising:
an elongated body having an exterior sidewall, a proximal end and an opposing distal end displaced from the proximal end along a longitudinal axis;
~~wherein~~ a first suture port and a separate second suture port near the proximal end, wherein the first suture port is independently fully encircled and uninterrupted by a first interior surface along a portion of its length and the second suture port is independently fully encircled and uninterrupted by a second interior surface along a portion of its length are each independently fully encircled by an interior surface at a location near the proximal end, wherein each of the first and second suture ports extends through an exterior sidewall of the elongated body distal to the location;
a channel near the proximal end of the elongated body, wherein the channel is formed within the exterior sidewall of the elongated body; and
a helical thread wound about and outwardly projecting from the elongated body;
wherein the first and second suture ports are positioned on either side of the

longitudinal axis to independently retain first and second suture portions;
wherein the elongated body is formed as a single, unitary piece.

30. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 29, further comprising the first and second suture portions, wherein the first and second suture portions are separate pieces from each other.

31. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 29, wherein at least a portion of each of the first and second suture ports extends distally of a proximal end of the helical thread.

32. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 29, wherein each of the first and second suture ports is displaced from the longitudinal axis so as not to intersect the longitudinal axis.

33. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 32, wherein a bore extends fully through the body along the longitudinal axis, wherein the first and second suture ports are positioned such that the first and second suture ports are not in communication with the bore.

34. (Currently Amended) The tissue retention system of claim 29, wherein at least ~~a~~ one portion of each of the first and second suture ports extends nonparallel to the longitudinal axis, wherein the at least one portion of the first and second suture ports is recessed within the exterior wall of the elongated body.

35. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 29, further comprising at least one suture positionable through at least the first suture port.

36. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 29, further comprising a tool configured to interface with the suture anchor to facilitate driving the suture anchor into bone.

37. (Currently Amended) A tissue retention system comprising:

a suture anchor comprising:

an elongated body having an exterior sidewall, a proximal end and an opposing distal end displaced from the proximal end along a longitudinal axis, wherein a bore extends along the longitudinal axis through a portion of a longitudinal length of the body ~~and terminates proximal to the distal end~~, wherein a first suture port extends through at least a portion of the body to receive a suture, wherein the first suture port is positioned such that the first suture port is not in communication with the bore;

a channel near the proximal end of the elongated body, wherein the channel is formed within the exterior sidewall of the elongated body; and

a helical thread wound about and outwardly projecting from the elongated body;

wherein at least a portion of the bore is shaped to receive a distal end of a driver to facilitate transmission of torque from the driver to the suture anchor;

wherein the elongated body is formed as a single, unitary piece.

38. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 37, wherein the first suture port extends distally of a proximal end of the helical thread.

39. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 38, wherein the first suture port intersects the helical thread.

40. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 37, wherein at least a second portion of the first suture port extends nonparallel to the longitudinal axis.

41. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 37, wherein a second suture port extends through at least the portion of the body, wherein the first and second suture ports are symmetrically arranged about the longitudinal axis.

42. (Previously Amended) The tissue retention system of claim 37, wherein the bore extends fully through the body along the longitudinal axis,

43. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 37, further comprising at least one suture positionable through at least the first suture port.

44. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 37, further comprising a tool configured to interface with the suture anchor to facilitate driving the suture anchor into bone.

45. (Currently Amended) A tissue retention system comprising:
a suture anchor comprising:

an elongated body having an exterior sidewall, a proximal end and an opposing distal end displaced from the proximal end along a longitudinal axis, wherein a first suture port and a second suture port each extend through at least a portion of the elongated body;

a channel near the proximal end of the elongated body, wherein the channel is formed within the exterior sidewall of the elongated body; and

a helical thread wound about and outwardly projecting from the elongated body;

wherein each of the first and second suture ports is configured to receive an intermediate suture portion such that the first and second suture ports cooperate to provide four parallel suture lengths extending proximally from four apertures of the proximal end, wherein each aperture is fully encircled by an interior surface of the elongated body;

wherein the elongated body is formed as a single, unitary piece.

46. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 45, wherein the first suture port intersects an exterior sidewall of the elongated body so as to communicate with a first opening of the exterior sidewall; wherein the second suture port intersects the exterior sidewall so as to communicate with a second opening of the exterior sidewall.

47. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 46, wherein the first and second openings intersect the helical thread.

48. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 45, wherein a first portion of each of the first and second suture ports extends parallel to the longitudinal axis; wherein a second portion of each of the first and second suture ports extends nonparallel to the longitudinal axis.

49. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 45, wherein the elongated body has a proximal end face, wherein the first suture port intersects the proximal end face so as to communicate with a first opening of the proximal end face; wherein the second suture port intersects

the proximal end face so as to communicate with a second opening of the proximal end face.

50. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 49, wherein a third suture port intersects the proximal end face so as to communicate with a third opening of the proximal end face, wherein the third suture port adjoins the first suture port so as to facilitate positioning a first intermediate suture portion within the first and third suture ports; wherein a fourth suture port intersects the proximal end face so as to communicate with a fourth opening of the proximal end face, wherein the fourth suture port adjoins the second suture port so as to facilitate positioning a second intermediate suture portion within the second and fourth suture ports.

51. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 45, wherein the first and second suture ports are symmetrically arranged about the longitudinal axis.

52. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 45, wherein the suture anchor comprises a substantially hexagonal drive feature positioned to receive torque from a tool to facilitate driving the suture anchor into bone.

53. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 45, further comprising at least one suture positionable through at least the first suture port.

54. (Previously Presented) The tissue retention system of claim 45, further comprising a tool configured to interface with the suture anchor to facilitate driving the suture anchor into bone.

55. (New) The tissue retention system of claim 37, wherein the bore terminates proximal to the distal end.